

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 6-11, and 22-27 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 3 and 23 are amended, and claims 21 and 28 are canceled without prejudice to disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments only incorporate allowable dependent claim features into independent claims; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claim 2 and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 21 and 28. By this Amendment, claims 3 and 23 are rewritten to incorporate the allowable features of claims 21 and 28, respectively. Therefore, claims 3 and 23 are allowable.

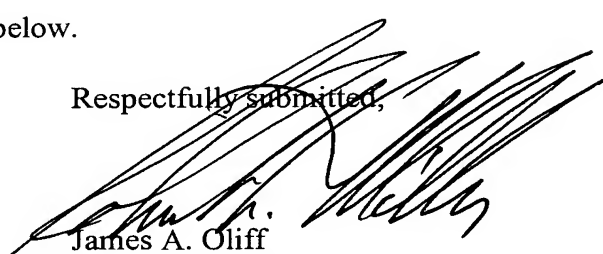
Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of non-elected claims 7-11 and 25-27 because their base claims 3 and 23, which are generic to all species, are allowable as discussed above. Claims 7-11 and 25-27 are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable base claims, as well as for the additional features they recite.

The Office Action rejects claims 3, 6 and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP-8-141804 ('804). This rejection is moot because independent claims 3 and 23 are amended to incorporate allowable features of canceled claims 21 and 28 as discussed above. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2, 3, 6-11, and 22-27 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Robert A. Miller
Registration No. 32,771

JAO:KXH/tbh

Date: January 27, 2006

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
--